GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

WANTED: DEAD

**FOOD POISONING BACTERIA ARE EVERYWHERE,
WAITING TO INVADE YOUR KITCHEN.
PUT THE "FOOD FELONS" ON YOUR UNWANTED LIST!**

SALMONELLA — (sal-mo-nel-la) — is one of the most common causes of food poisoning. More than two million cases of illness from Salmonella bacteria are believed to occur in the U.S. each year. Salmonella food poisoning can cause nausea, vomiting, fever, stomach cramps, diarrhea and headache — symptoms which appear within 24 hours after eating contaminated food. Most people recover in two to four days.

Salmonella bacteria are commonly found on raw meat and poultry, and in fish, eggs and dairy products. Once in your kitchen, these bacteria can then contaminate other foods.

There is no way to tell whether Salmonella germs are present by looking at, tasting or smelling the food. However, Salmonella germs can be destroyed by heat, so always use a meat thermometer and cook foods thoroughly. Even leftovers should be reheated thoroughly to prevent infection from these bacteria.

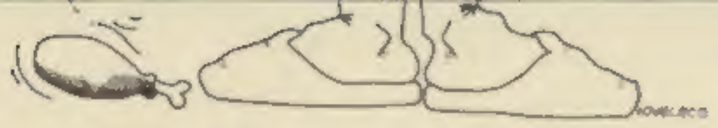
STAPHYLOCOCCUS — (staf-i-lo-kok-us) — bacteria are found on your skin, in your nose and throat, and on raw meat. Food can become contaminated with this bacteria during preparation if your hands and the cooking utensils you use are not washed carefully.

Moist foods such as custards and cream-filled pastries, and egg, ham, chicken, tuna, macaroni or potato salads whose ingredients come into close contact with your skin as you cut and dice them, are most often involved in food poisoning by these bacteria.

If "Staph" germs become too numerous, they form a poison which you CANNOT boil or bake away. The poison will give you stomach cramps and diarrhea and make you vomit. These symptoms will appear within two to four hours after eating and may bother you for one to two days.

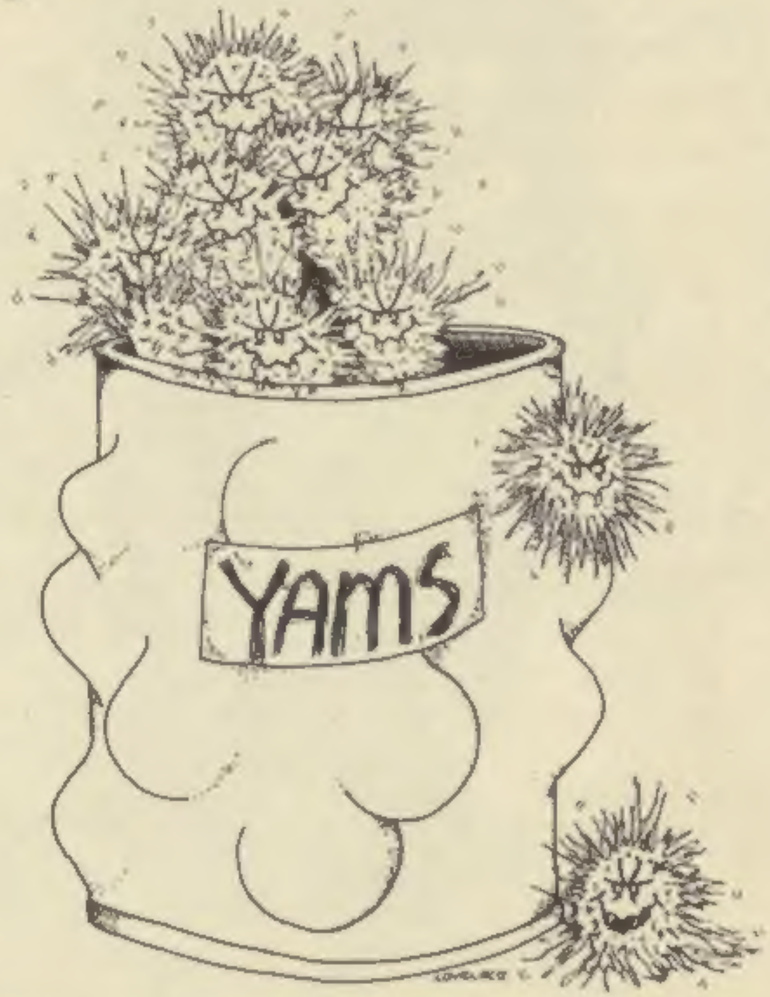
CLOSTRIDIUM PERFRINGENS — (klos-trid-ee-um/per-fringe-ins) — is more widespread than any other disease-causing bacteria, and can be found in soil and dust, on food, and in the intestinal tracts of people and warm-blooded animals.

Restaurant kitchens and school and hospital cafeterias where large amounts of food are prepared and then left to stand at room temperature for long periods of time, are often breeding grounds for these bacteria.



Large numbers of Perfringens bacteria can cause diarrhea and stomach pain in anywhere from 4 to 22 hours, but usually in about 12 hours.

To prevent Clostridium Perfringens poisoning in your home, always thoroughly cook meats, keep them hot (above 140 F), and serve them hot. Or, if you cook meat for later use, refrigerate it until you are ready to serve. Thoroughly reheat leftover meals, casseroles and gravies before serving.



BOTULISM — (botch-u-lizm) — is the most serious type of food poisoning. A tiny amount of the poison produced by these germs can **kill** you!

Although causes of botulism poisoning are rare today because of the strict health controls used by most commercial food manufacturers, home-canned meats and low-acid canned foods (such as string-beans, beets and corn) prepared by methods other than pressure canning, are often good breeding grounds for botulism spores, so great care must be taken to use the appropriate temperatures when canning foods at home.

Signs of botulism poisoning appear 12 to 36 hours after eating. The symptoms are double vision, inability to swallow, difficulty in speaking, and progressive paralysis of the throat and lungs. If you have any of these symptoms, SEE A DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY!

To guard against botulism, inspect ALL food containers before opening and serving. Look for these telltale signs of botulism poisoning: broken, bent or bulging cans, a strange color or an unusual odor of the food. Avoid food in containers with broken or leaky seals. If in doubt: DON'T EAT IT! DON'T EVEN TASTE IT! Just a little taste could kill you!

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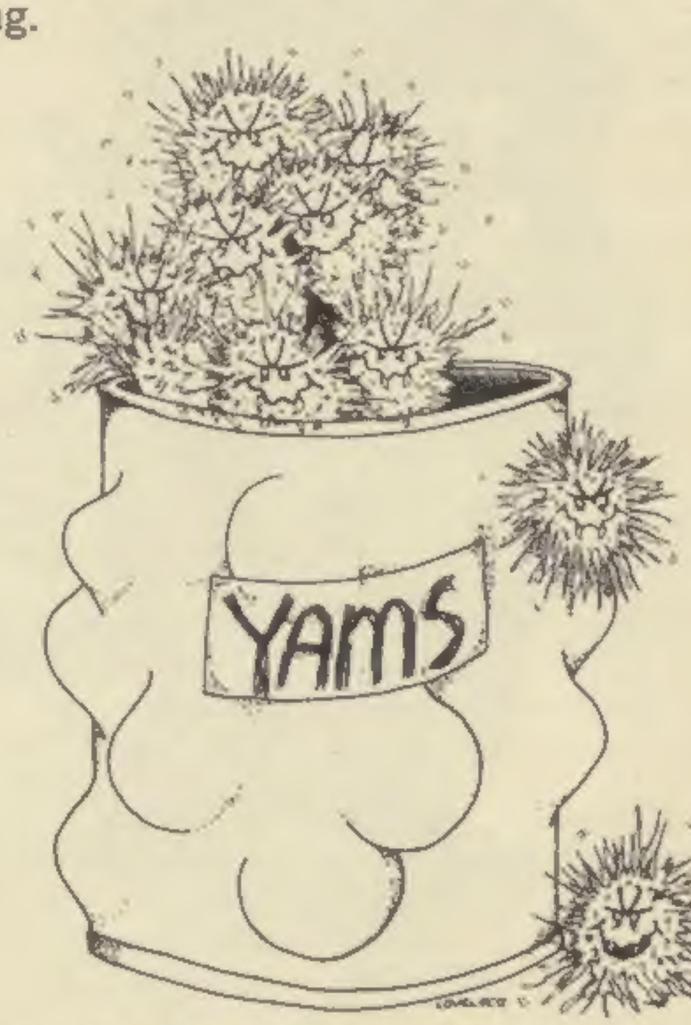

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IF YOU FIND CONTAMINATED FOOD

If you find that a food you bought is contaminated, you will be doing a public service if you report it to the Federal Government. Call the nearest office of the Food and Drug Administration, the branch of the government that handles these problems. You can find the number in the phone book under the "United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare".

Be prepared to describe the problem and to provide the name of the store in which you bought the spoiled food. Make sure you also report the problem to the storekeeper and to the manufacturer, packer or distributor of the product. You can probably find his company's name on the package or can in which the food was sold.

Many legal actions taken by the Government are based on information supplied by consumers like yourself. Although not all complaints will lead to legal action, each will be investigated.

More importantly, though, you will help to prevent a possible tragedy in someone else's household or in your own.

THE FOOD FELONS!

HOW CAN YOU AVOID UNINVITED GUESTS?

1. Clean your hands before and after handling raw foods. Thoroughly wash all cutting surfaces and utensils after each use.
2. Put perishable and frozen foods in the refrigerator as soon as you get home.
3. If you prepare foods ahead of time, put them in the refrigerator until you're ready to serve them.
4. Don't leave leftover foods on the table; store them in the refrigerator immediately. If left out overnight by accident, throw them out!
5. Keep your refrigerator at 40°F, or below. Buy a thermometer if necessary.
6. Don't let frozen foods thaw at room temperature. Defrost them in the refrigerator.
7. Cool foods in small containers so that the temperature of the food is brought down to 40°F in 2 to 3 hours.
8. When cooking meats, use a meat thermometer to make sure **all** meats — and especially fresh pork — are heated to at least 185°F all the way through.
9. Be careful handling pets in the home. Pet feeding dishes, toys or bedding should not be allowed in the kitchen or near any item which comes in contact with the family's food.
10. When canning foods at home, use the "cold pack" method for acid foods **only.** Temperatures used in the "cold pack" method are not high enough to kill botulism bacteria in **non**-acid foods such as meat or vegetables. If the un-opened can is swollen, if the food foams or doesn't look or smell right, throw it out. Tasting it could **kill** you!

Consumer Action Team Project

A Program Of The
Youth Development Division

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BETTER HEALTH THROUGH BETTER COMMUNICATION